ECHOMEDIA
HAMILTON'S AUTONOMOUS VOICE
#2 *free*

War Of Profits

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait brought a world reaction of troops and economic sanctions. The U.N. sponsored reaction had nothing to do with peace and world justice as the media and George Bush would have us believe. Instead it has more to do with the U.S. securing its military and economic interests in the oil rich area.

Saddam Hussein has threatened to redistribute oil wealth among the poorer more densely populated Arab nations. This and Iraqi domination of important oil facilities could lead to profits staying in the middle east. This would mean that Exxon and the like would lose some of their mega profits. George Bush is an oil man and understands how important profits are to business people, more important than the deaths of thousands of people.

Many countries have something to gain by a war in the gulf, such as Israel. Israel has already asked for and received more U.S. finacial and military aid. This aid will help the present attempt to crush the intifada and clear out Palestinians to create room for the influx of Russian immigration. U.S. military presence will also give Israel more security to continue its expansion into Lebanon without fear of massive arab resestance.

Military institutions will be able to reverse funding decreases because of the war. Arms manufacturers and technology companies will benefit from the new orders flowing in from the government. Oil companies have already used the war as a justification to put increases on oil prices and expand their profit margins.

The United Nations has gone along with and agreed on the US proposed war deadline. It was met with very little opposition and those that did oppose were soon forced to change their minds. The US bribed the USSR with grain subsidies if they voted in favour of using force after Jan. 15. Qatar's opposition was silenced by US threats to stop sending aid to that country.

With power plays like these who can expect or rely on the UN to uphold its job of peace keeping. The UN only seems to react to those situations that the superpowers wish them to. There was no call for sanctions against the US after its invasions of Grenada and Panama much less a call for war. Nothing has been done by the U.N to seriously stop Israel from murdering Palestinians or aparthied in South Africa.

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Barricades in Berlin

First in a Series on the Squatting Movement Under Fire

"Squatting" has always been one way to solve the housing crisis for homeless people. Unoccupied houses, apartments, or land are occupied by those who need them as an alternative to life on the streets. Squatting challenges the notion of private property, a notion which leaves buildings empty while people sleep on the streets. However squatting also goes beyond being merely a band-aid on a crisis created by land speculation and private ownership, it can also a be a part of creating real alternatives to capitalist society. Not only is the act of squatting an act of self-determination, a direct action in itself, the communities created by squatters can often be the catalyst for changing social relations between the participants, as people arrange their own lives together and distribute power equally. They can also be centres for political activity. Perhaps that's the main reason why these "liberated zones" come under such fierce attack by police. Defending squats is not a tea-party, as the following article will show — but it is often the only option for people who have nowhere else to go.

Ecomedia will be presenting a series of articles on different squats under attack: here in Canada, in Berlin, and in New York.

Until recent police action succeeded in evicting the squatted houses of the Mainzerstrasse in East Berlin, the area served as a vibrant centre for the left in the city. Twelve buildings, including gay and lesbian houses, a bookstore, and a coffee house had been squatted by over 100 people for more than six months, but a November 14th police attack forced the squatters out.

Prior to the attacks, a city-wide squatters plenary, including representatives from over 130 squats in East Berlin, was trying to negotiate with the city government. In a city with tens-of-thousands of homeless, 25,000 apartments vacant in East Berlin alone coupled with soaring rents, squatting has become the number one solution for shelter. No evictions were expected until after the civic elections on December 2. The element of surprise gave police the upper hand when, on November 12, they raided three long-term squats and met little resistance.

Once word of the attack spread, a demonstration erupted, and traffic barricades were erected. Police drove through the Mainzerstrasse firing CS gas and water blasts into squats and regular tenants' buildings alike as a provocation. Once the police retreated, over a thousand supporters poured into the area and prepared serious defences.

Some politicians, neighbours and others supporting the squatters tried to negotiate a solution with the governing coalition, while the Social Democrats, the police and West Berlin's mayor initiated a media campaign to criminalize the squatters.

In the early morning of November 14, over 4000 police and "anti-terror units" sealed off the neighbourhood and fired off more CS gas (a chemical weapon which causes asthma attacks, vomiting, etc), rubber bullets, shock grenades and live ammunition. Squatters held out for 3 hours, but in the end over 400 were arrested, 2 shot and injured by "stray bullets" and one woman remains in hospital from police beatings.

Support came immediately from a 15,000-strong demonstration in East Berlin, attacks on banks, department stores and police stations across Germany, occupations and a firebombing of German embassies in other European countries. The Alternative List left the governing coalition they had made with the Social Democrats in protest.

Some believe the Social Democrats are looking for the law-and-order ticket in the upcoming elections and also that they see any example of self-determination as a threat to the "New Greater Germany". The opposition has to be either pacified or crushed, especially in the designated capital.

The police are also known to be following guidelines set by the TREVI Commission ("Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, Violence International") which functions as the West European counterinsurgency planning committee, and whose guidelines state that all squats in Western Europe must be empty by 1992 — the year of European unification.

The Mainzerstrasse has been sealed off by police while construction crews demolish the houses.

(condensed from a longer report by Heike Klefner, West Berlin)

WAR CONT'D

The U.S senate has given Mr. Bush the power to start the war on Jan. 16 if he wants. As this decision was made, thousands of people throughout the world demonstrated against the upcoming bloodshed. Here in Hamilton about 1,500 people voiced their objection to Mulroney's war dreams. As usual our government refuses to reconize the people's desire to stay out of the war. The government seems more intent on following Bush's orders than those of ordinary Canadians.

It is up to people and not politicians to oraganize and resist their governments acceptance of waging war on the behalf of a power crazed few. It is our sisters and brothers and working people who will die not Mulroney, Clark or those who have started the war and will profit from it.

RESIST TO EXIST

Natives Harassed

The recent confrontation at Kahnawake (Jan. 8) between Mohawks and police was sparked by six months of tension after last summers events. Tensions have risen due to the continual failure of the Canadian government to keep its promises to native peoples (what else would you expect from them). Surete du Quebec and R.C.M.P. presence on Mohawk sovereign land has added to that tension and provoked Mohawks.

Some Mohawks feel that the police provocation is an attempt to arrest people involved in the blockade of the Mercier bridge in the summer. Police know that their presence and harassment will lead to fights and then arrests (such as the 8 on Jan. 8th). This will divert funds and energy, previously used to further the Mohawk struggle for liberation, into court cases and posting bail.

These harassment tactics are similar to those used by the F.B.I. at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota against the American Indian Movement in the 1970's. A.I.M. had been instrumental in establishing an independant Indian nation like the Mohawks are trying to do. The nation was brutally suppressed by continual disrupment, assassination, and false arrests of leaders, like Leonard Peltier.

Police have begun their campaign to destroy the liberation movement on Mohawk land and will continue it. We must not forget the Native struggle and continue to support it.

Send donations to The Liberation of the Mohawk Nation Legal Defense Fund : Caisse Populaire Account # 80186 , P.O.B. 1987 Kahnawake, Que J0L1B0

ECHOMEDIA

Echomedia is an international "wire service" that acts as an alternative to regular news. We p print news that is often censored dealing with autonomous and anarchist resistance as well as an analysis current events. To recieve this newsletter send a S.A.S.E. to Echomedia Hamilton P.O.B. 57069 Jackson Stn. Hamilton, ON L8P 4W9.

Lubicons Charged

Thirteen Lubicon Nation members have been charged following the destruction of Buchanan Lumber's logging equipment in their traditional area (see last issue). Buchanan has begun logging in unceded Lubicon lands in northern Alberta despite assurances from the 500-member Cree nation that all developments not authorized by the rightful owners of the land would be dismantled. Buchanan's equipment was torched and tires slashed several weeks ago.

The Lubicon Nation has been fighting for over 50 years for legal rights to their traditional territories. Oil development and now forestry has destroyed their traditional hunting and trapping economy and forced 95% of the community onto welfare.

During the previous week, the RCMP took in 18 Nation members for questioning, charging them with mischief, holding them incommunicado and then not pressing the charges after hours of questioning. Members were told they would bear the brunt of the whole thing unless they co-operate. One young man was assaulted while in custody.

On December 12, charges of arson, mischief, possession of explosives, and disguise with intent were laid against 13 Lubicons. They are scheduled to appear in court on January 7 and 14, 1991. The Lubicons' position is that the province has no jurisdiction on sovereign Lubicon lands and therefore the Nation members are not subject to Canadian courts. Several years ago charges were dropped against a Lubicon duck hunter who was hunting without a provincial license when he asked the court to prove they had jurisdiction on Lubicon lands. How the Alberta government hopes to prove its jurisdiction over unceded Native lands this time around is still a mystery.

Framed Journalist on Death Row

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the only overtly political prisoner on death row in the U.S. Unless activists in North America continue to mobilize and intensify their protest, the U.S. State will murder an innocent man whom they've wanted dead for over 20 years.

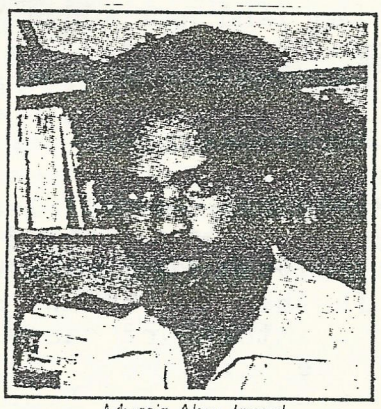
In 1968, aged 14, Jamal co-founded the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP), a black organization which advocated self-determination and revolution through armed resistance to the racist state and police force. The brutal state-sponsored repression that the Panthers faced-foreshadowed what Jamal would eventually suffer.

After the BPP was annihilated, Jamal became a widely acclaimed journalist. He was one of the few to accurately portray the 1978 siege of a MOVE (a Black Liberation, Anti-Industrial group) house in Powelton Village, Philadelphia, by over 600 heavily armed cops. To report the events accurately was to reveal the caring humyns who comprise MOVE and expose state terrorism. Jamal was targeted for "neutralization" to ensure that he would not report the truth behind the planned massacre in 1985, in which Philadelphia cops dropped a bomb on a MOVE house, killing 11, including 5 children.

On Dec. 9, 1981, Jamal was framed for murdering a cop, although witnesses described the actual killer as an altogether different man.

The prosecution was able to argue successfully for the death penalty by slandering defence witnesses and misleading the 11 member white jury. The most blatant instance of deception was the prosecution's statement that Jamal would be granted "appeal after appeal" to have his sentence reduced.

On Feb 1, 1990, the Pennsylvania supreme court denied Jamal's petition to re-argue his final appeal. His fate now rests with the U.S. Supreme Court, where Chief Racist William Rehnquist has made it clear that he considers death row appeals to be a waste of time, despite the fact that two condemned men were able to establish their innocence prior to their scheduled executions in 1988.



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Jamal's case clearly illustrates the racist use of the death penalty and proves that people in Amerika can and are being incarcerated and sentenced to death solely because of their political beliefs.